

U.S. Department of Education
2012 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Public School - 12NC10

School Type (Public Schools): ☐ Charter ☐ Title 1 ☐ Magnet ☒ Choice
(Check all that apply, if any)

Name of Principal: Ms. Sheila Gasque

Official School Name: Robeson Early College High School

School Mailing Address: 5170 Fayetteville Road
 Lumberton, NC 28360-2158

County: Robeson County State School Code Number*: 780385

Telephone: (910) 737-5232 E-mail: sheila.gasque@robeson.k12.nc.us

Fax: (910) 737-5231 Web site/URL: http://www.robeson.k12.nc.us/Domain/1940

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Johnny Hunt Superintendent e-mail: johnny.hunt@robeson.k12.nc.us

District Name: Robeson County Schools District Phone: (910) 671-6000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Dr. Jo Ann Lowery

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

**Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

12NC10

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2011-2012 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2006.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 or 2011.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

12NC10

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 23 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
(per district designation): 13 Middle/Junior high schools
7 High schools
0 K-12 schools
43 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 8356

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Small city or town in a rural area
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2011 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0		6	0	0	0
K	0	0	0		7	0	0	0
1	0	0	0		8	0	0	0
2	0	0	0		9	18	27	45
3	0	0	0		10	16	29	45
4	0	0	0		11	20	21	41
5	0	0	0		12	23	39	62
Total in Applying School:								193

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 39 % American Indian or Alaska Native
1 % Asian
15 % Black or African American
15 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
29 % White
1 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2010-2011 school year: 6%

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred to the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	0
(2)	Number of students who transferred from the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	11
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	11
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	193
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.06
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	6

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 0%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 0

Number of non-English languages represented: 0

Specify non-English languages:

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 68%

Total number of students who qualify: 120

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 0%

Total number of students served: 0

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>10</u>	<u>1</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
Total number	<u>14</u>	<u>8</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1:

16:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	96%	98%	97%
High school graduation rate	94%	90%	89%	68%	0%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2011 are doing as of Fall 2011.

Graduating class size:	<u>32</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>53%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>28%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0%</u>
Found employment	<u>13%</u>
Military service	<u>6%</u>
Other	<u>%</u>
Total	<u>100%</u>

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

☒ No

☐ Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

The tiny mobile unit office tucked between the pine trees and headstones of a community college and a neighboring cemetery seems an unlikely place to be the hub of powerful educational reform taking place in rural southeastern North Carolina. Yet this is where you will find Robeson Early College High School, a pioneer in the early college movement, graduating first generation high school and college graduates and sending college educated young people into the workforce, changing the economic future of Robeson County, North Carolina.

At first glance you wonder how a school set against the backdrop of the extreme poverty and illiteracy found in the third poorest county in the nation and the largest, most racially diverse county in North Carolina could in six short years have propelled itself into the ranks of the highest performing schools in the state. Keenly aware of our county's great need to create a more skilled workforce, our school district decided to take action. In partnership with The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and The North Carolina New Schools Project, the Public Schools of Robeson County founded Robeson Early College High School (RECHS). This new school initiative was designed to recruit disadvantaged students from all over the county and provide them the opportunity, academic support, and small school structure needed to obtain both a high school diploma and a free community college education over a five-year period. Enrollment preference is given to students with financial need who would be first time college attendees in their families, live in single parent or no-parent homes, or would otherwise face great difficulties in attending college. In surveying our student body over the last six years you find that between 65 – 81% qualify for free or reduced lunch status and many are not only first generation college students but are also first generation Americans.

Since Robeson Early College High School moved its first portable buildings onto the Robeson Community College campus the day before classes began in 2005, we have achieved four high school graduations while steadily improving our graduation rate each year from 67.7% in 2008 to 93.5% in 2011. Since 2008, our school has graduated a total of 106 high school students, who have collectively earned a total of 4910 college credits. Thirty-nine have been awarded full Associate's degrees by Robeson Community College. This is outstanding considering many of our students would statistically have never finished high school in a traditional setting. All of our graduates have since moved on to contribute to our community by pursuing higher education or careers either in the military or local workforce.

A product of the rigorous standards set by our administration and staff is our growth as evidenced through data. Our test scores have leapt from 65.9% proficiency in 2005 to 95.8% in 2011. Each year the school has also achieved its AYP targets, was recognized in 2010 as a North Carolina Honor School of Excellence, and has consistently been awarded the district's high attendance banner. Apart from data and district-wide accomplishments, we are also noted by the local traditional high schools for our high student expectations as well as the engaging techniques implemented by the teachers. Protocols provided by the NC New Schools Project invite a culture of continuous and relevant education and growth for our students beyond their early college experience.

RECHS truly lives up to its mission of being "a quality-driven school with a focus on rigor, relevance, and relationships, which will ensure student success." Along with the demands of honors-level high school curricula, all students begin taking college classes upon meeting RCC admission's minimum score requirements on the COMPASS placement exam. Students participate in a variety of relevant, real-world learning experiences that prepare them to meet their educational and career goals. The low student-to-teacher ratio and small-school environment promotes strong relationships through an effective advisory program, small classes, as well as community and family connections. RECHS is a family in every sense of the word, especially for our students who often lack that stability and support-structure in their homes.

1. Assessment Results:

A. Robeson Early College High School administers the North Carolina End of Course tests (EOCs) as mandated by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Students are currently given EOCs at the end of the semester in the areas of English 1 (grade 9), Algebra 1 (grade 9), and Biology (grade 10). In order to be deemed proficient in these areas, students must obtain a score of Level 3 or 4. A level 3 score indicates that a student is consistently performing at grade level standards, while a Level 4 score indicates a student working ahead of grade level. Previous student cohorts have additionally been required to take assessments in Civics, US History, Physical Science, and Chemistry along with a writing assessment in tenth grade. Effective with the 2011-2012 school year tenth grade students will be required to take the PLAN and eleventh graders will take the ACT to meet new legislative requirements still being put in place by the General Assembly and state board of education. Currently North Carolina mandates that calculation of AYP for NCLB be measured in high schools using English 1 and Algebra 1 EOC test results.

In addition to meeting testing standards to fulfill state and federal accountability requirements, students at Robeson Early College High are also required to take the COMPASS college placement exam in order to gain admission to college courses. In order to pass students must achieve the following scores: reading 81, Writing 70, Pre-Algebra 47, Algebra 46, Intermediate Math 66, and OPAC (Keyboarding) 20.

B. Over the past five years our school has seen a steady increase in its performance on the state administered assessments, jumping from 65% proficiency in 2006-2007 to 95.7% in 2010-2011. Over this time period there have been gains in each tested area. English scores have risen from 90% to 100% and Math from 78% to 100%. There have been occasional slight swings in increasing performance trends in specific content areas due staff turnover, the strengths and weaknesses of particular cohorts, and the small size of cohort groups. It should be particularly noted that growth in student achievement on state tests has been most substantial since scheduling allowed us to structure our freshmen classes into smaller cohorts, thus allowing them a smaller learning environment in which to thrive. Additionally, incorporating cross-curricular support in literacy and for tested subject areas has enhanced students skill and performance. As the school has become more firmly established, students and staff have begun to develop a deeper bond with each other which has also contributed to increased performance and completion rates. To date, our school has also seen growth in its graduation rate which has soared from 67.7 to 93.5%. In looking at our most recent testing data there are no large achievement gaps to fill.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Beginning with the first year of the school, the entire staff began to put strategies in place to help the students become successful. One of the first changes put in place was a tutoring period in the master schedule. Thirty minutes each day is to be a time for students to receive extra help with classroom work. Mondays, students go to first period, Tuesday is used for second period and so forth. Friday's time is used for Advisement.

Early on we noticed many students failing the college entrance test (COMPASS), teachers took the test themselves to find out the skills necessary to pass. This translated into their classrooms as lessons. Many teachers establish relationships such that they give up planning period time for further tutoring. Seeing they students needed help with SAT and ACT, teachers put courses into the master schedule to reinforce many skills and information needed for these test as well. They began using SAT words daily in classrooms and planned outside consultants to conduct workshops for students and teachers. This year our tenth graders took the PLAN for the first time, we looked at results for students that give the skills they need extra work, discussed collaboratively and have used common deficiencies in lesson planning. This has become a topic of discussion during staff development and PLCs.

At the beginning of each school year, teachers review goal summary reports which show percentages of questions from the assessments for each goal in the Standard Course of Study. Instruction is planned accordingly.

Vertical alignment is used to make sure students' movement through grade levels and courses is seamless and continuous. This has been done for all curriculum areas. Many strategies that have proved to be successful are used in all classrooms. Examples of these are: low stakes writing, exit tickets, classroom talk, test taking tips, and group work. All early college High School teachers want to improve their teaching, student success and school improvement. They willingly accept coaching from the Instructional Coach provided by the New Schools Project, go to educational conferences, attend symposiums and love to go to other early colleges to observe and conduct Peer Reviews. This year because of the coming Common Core and Essential Standards Curriculum, teachers attend district staff development, they serve on committees to write the district curriculum guides and plans. Our teachers are planning many cross curricular projects to reinforce the interconnectedness of subject areas.

The ultimate goal for every staff member at Robeson Early College is for each student to be college and career ready when they begin their college courses and when they graduate from our school with their high school diploma and Associates Degree from the Community College.

Information concerning students' academic achievements is communicated several ways. Teachers make contact with a large majority of their students' parents each week. Many times it is to brag on their success. All teachers post grades online using Engrade software. This is accessible to parents via internet. Parents and students see all assignments given, grades for the ones completed and those they are missing. Communication can take place through emails as some parents prefer it that way. Quarterly conferences are held during the year, with dates advertised in the student handbook which parents get at the beginning of each year. When needed, extra conferences are called to discuss issues that may arise. Parent Nights are held to discuss PLAN results, COMPASS information, and upcoming registration information. Students with academic weaknesses have Personalized Education Plans written which address deficits and strategies that will be used to help. Teachers meet to discuss student, what is working in the classrooms where the student is being successful, and how all teachers can help. Parents are a part of this process as well. During registration time, conferences are held with students and parents to look at transcripts, programs of study and course offerings. The goal at that time is to make sure the student is following their education plan.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Teachers at Robeson Early College High School are so excited about what they have going at their school, they are always willing to share strategies and practices with others. They have presented at various meetings, workshops, and conferences. Our English has presented model lessons at the North Carolina New Schools Project Best Practices Fall Symposium. A session entitled "Making Groups Work" was shared at the New Schools Summer Institute. Various teachers have conducted workshops for area schools on the topics of WOW teaching Methods and ELS Best Instructional Practices. All of the staff worked at a low performing high school last year for two weeks to remediate the students for End of Course testing. Presentations have been given to the local Literacy Council. The Instructional strategies we have used for the past seven years are now being adopted in many of the traditional high schools in our district. The Science Department has presented to participants at the North Carolina Science Teachers annual Conference where he spoke of research conducted on the chemistry of biodiesel and the chemistry of kidney stones and the unit lesson plans that he developed from the research. This same teacher has spoken at two (2) National Science conferences in New Orleans and Charlotte, N.C. on "Cook Book" Chemistry Labs. These are inquiry based labs and collecting and analyzing the data received by the students. Many of our teachers are working closely with the Community College during the summer with special projects for example with a partnership with NASA. Periodically our network of Early Colleges meets to share practices and programs. The Principal and Guidance Counselor presented the Advisory Program established at our school. This has made our teachers become more involved in the educational program of our students through high school and while they pursue their Associates Degree. Plans are

also underway to present to the College instructors, strategies we use in our high school classes so they can understand better how our students learn.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

Through the years Robeson County has had major changes that have caused our area to revisit the career opportunities that our students need to explore. Our students have the opportunity to be on a community college campus through the Bill & Belinda Gates Foundation. Stakeholders are a part of the student's education to reach higher expectations for a successful career is a special opportunity. The community involvement with guest speakers, visit to the surrounding businesses, and to invite the business leaders to our school to perform real life conditions allows our students to come to realize the importance to their education.

The community college, businesses and parents involve the students in activities through internships, job shadowing and special circumstances that the college may have. Our students participate in many activities that include presentations at the participating elementary and middle schools through the college NASA Grant. The students experiment with laboratory research to development hybrid possibilities, professional interviews, professional collaborative presentations and interaction with professional individuals.

At Robeson Early College High School we strive to expose the students in as many possibilities as possible. All the students get Career Readiness Certification (CRC) to possibly use if they apply for a part time or full time job while they are in school or after school. We have partnered with the local hospital where many of our students have job shadowed a career in the medical field and some have adventured into pursuing their internship at the hospital. We have several other businesses that allow students to job shadow and intern. The veterinary hospitals, pharmacies, law offices, EMS stations are a few facilities that are providing our students with a well-rounded opportunity for a career that is desperately needed as our area careers have changed in the last 25 years. We also participant in special events through partnerships such as CareerReady Robeson, AT&T, Robeson Community College, and many local businesses.

Our parents, teachers and community is informed of upcoming events through our school's website. Each student that has a cell phone can set up a texting account to contact them with information on a individual basis. Students and parents have the luxury of keeping up the child's grades daily through a internet site such as Engrade. Our PTSO has been supportive with special events that boost morale in our school with activities such as Spring Fling, Homecoming Day. Our SGA sponsors several events that reach out to our community through Relay for Life, 9/11 Program for First responders, Day of Caring.

Our parents, teachers and community are informed of upcoming events through our school's website. Each student that has a cell phone can set up a texting account to contact them with information on a individual basis. Students and parents have the luxury of keeping up the child's High School grades daily through a internet site such as Engrade. Our PTSO has been supportive with special events that boost morale in our school with activities such as Spring Fling, Homecoming Day. Our SGA sponsors several events that reach out to our community through Relay for Life, 9/11 Program for First responders, Day of Caring.

1. Curriculum:

The Early College High School is an innovative learning environment designed to inspire and motivate students who have the potential to be the first in their families to graduate from college. It is an exciting opportunity for students beginning ninth grade to participate in a combined high school and college experience with the goal of earning a high school diploma and college associate degree at the same time. Curriculum is challenging, support services plentiful and family involvement encouraged as a necessity. By taking advantage of the college's resources and laboratories, faculties from both education environments, and by using technology and non-traditional instructional strategies students will be more engaged in the learning process.

Recognizing the need for Robeson County to foster a more educated workforce to meet the demands of our changing economy inspired the creation of this innovative partnership with Robeson Community College. Our communities will increase the number of first generation college graduates, equipping them with the education and experience they need to succeed in life and family-supporting careers. With the support and involvement of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, North Carolina New Schools Project and individuals from our communities, the Early College model was adopted.

In their first two years at Robeson Early College, students undertake a course of study designed to provide a solid grounding in mathematics, science, history, English, and a foreign language and complete the state requirements in physical education and health. They are encouraged from the beginning to participate in extracurricular activities and community service. The teachers use a common framework that drives the instructional practices and has supported our success because it defines common practices that are used consistently from classroom to classroom. These strategies give all student of all skill levels access to the complex information needed to meet state and college-ready stand and engage all student, requiring each to take an active role in their own learning. Those strategies are: collaborative groups, writing to learn, literacy groups, questioning skills, scaffolding, and classroom talk. Collaborative group work is used also as students complete cross curricular projects that end with presentations by students in front of student and adult groups. Teachers confer with college instructors and teach those skills that will make them successful in their college classes. Students are scheduled as much as possible with high school classes that will support them in their program of study. Teachers use Advisement time to guide our students with choosing classes and instructors that will make them successful. Our Freshman Seminar curriculum stresses those discovery activities which will show the students their best study styles, learning styles, and personality traits. They become familiar with the college campus and many of the resources they can take advantage of when they become college students. Part of the curriculum is geared toward interests in careers and programs of study.

Our school is also participants in the High Schools That Work initiative which is founded on the conviction that most students can master rigorous academic and career and technical studies if school leaders and teacher create an environment that motivates students to make the effort to succeed. Those key practices are: high expectations, a specified program of study, academic and career/technical studies, work-based learning, teachers working together, students actively engaged, extra help through tutoring and guidance, and a culture of continuous improvement.

2. Reading/English:

The English curriculum as designed by the state of North Carolina requires all ninth graders to cover various genres of literature in preparation for the NC End-of-Course English I Test. Students read and study World Literature in tenth grade, American literature in eleventh grade, and British literature in twelfth grade. In all grades students are expected to become proficient in written expression through

narrative, critical, and argumentative essays as well as Standard English usage in both their writing and speech.

A significant aspect of the English curriculum is the implementation of the protocols that are instituted by the NC New Schools Project. These protocols activate the prior knowledge necessary to create a foundation for learning as well as serve to formatively assess the student's comprehension, analysis, and evaluation of the material. The protocols are an excellent technique to actively engage students, allowing them to take ownership of their learning.

All students at RECHS are expected to pass the reading portion of the college placement test and are provided with assistance through a Creative Writing class. Paired with cross-curricular readings of informative texts as well as narratives, students are taught the necessary skills to not only pass the COMPASS to succeed in their college classes.

The English department utilizes alternate assessment techniques not only through the protocols but also with the use of multimedia and digital literacy. Besides the use of power point and Prezi to display researched information and texts, digital media, even in the form of music videos, is used to cover all levels of standards as well as the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. With writing being a major area of language arts, the English department is not dependent upon formal research and writings to assess their students' learning. Low-stakes writing assignments are equally valuable in allowing the students to think beyond the comprehension level, carrying valuable knowledge as well as the necessary writing skills with them onto the college setting.

3. Mathematics:

The mathematics curriculum at Robeson Early College High School is based upon The North Carolina Standard Course of Study and consists of all college preparatory, honors-level courses that students are advanced through while being held to high levels of accountability. Ninth grade students are placed in Integrated Mathematics I and tenth grade students are placed in Integrated Mathematics II and III. Each course is infused with a more rigorous aspect of the same core mathematics standards. After taking a college placement test in the spring of their sophomore year, students who are successful transition into college level Pre-Calculus followed by Calculus I and II. Students who are not successful are placed in Integrated Mathematics IV and Advanced Mathematics or Discrete Math for additional preparation for the college curricula and development of skills not yet attained.

The highly qualified mathematics teachers collaborate daily to plan instruction. The entire mathematics faculty is state certified with a Master's Degree or working toward Master's certification. Teachers communicate daily about academic growth and development of individual students, curriculum, instructional methods, and assessment. A variety of research-based instructional methods infused with technology are used in all mathematics classes daily. Instructional methods are outlined by the Common Core Mathematical Practices and the New Schools Project core instructional strategies. Instructional methods promote problem-solving through critical thinking with an emphasis on communication and collaboration. The math department also works with the entire staff to use cross-curricular, project-based learning to enrich student learning experiences throughout all courses.

Much effort is taken to improve the mathematics skills of students who are performing at either above or below grade level. Because of the small class sizes at RECHS, teachers are able to build strong relationships with students and work individually with high as well as lower achievers to differentiate experiences in the same classroom. In addition to class time, tutoring is offered by each teacher to help improve the performance of the students along with peer tutoring provided by upperclassmen. Peer tutoring benefits the higher achieving student by improving analysis and synthesis skills and fostering leadership. The end result is for all students to perform above grade level and ultimately passing the college entrance exam so they can be placed in college level mathematics courses for the remainder of their high school career.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Early College High School promotes learning beyond classroom walls. The Science and Social Studies departments focus on giving students a solid academic foundation that encourages the students to collaborate with institutions of higher learning to obtain real-life work and research experience. School-sponsored internships allow the students to engage in science-related research that promotes critical thinking and problem solving skills in a career-oriented environment. These career skills cap off their learning by conducting presentations to budding young scientists in elementary and middle schools, making RECHS students leaders as well as learners.

A lot of the community involvement begins back inside the walls of the ECHS classroom. Students are actively involved in scaffolding their skills and knowledge to prepare themselves for the academic and professional challenges of post-high school world. Laboratory work and project based learning requires students to observe and analyze data, then apply what they learn as 21st century skills. An example of project bases learning in the classroom is displayed by having students create models of plant and animal cells. By designing these cells, students express their creativity, learn the difference between plant and animal cellular structures, become familiar with the functions of cell organelles, and generate a project that fills them with pride and self confidence.

ECHS energizes and excites students to explore and pursue higher goals in academic and career pathways. We see future scientists in all who enter the doors willing to soar above obstacles and boundaries, developing relationships that will help them through their academic and personal journey. ECHS science and social studies teachers collaborate with New Schools Project and Robeson Community College instructors to implement one on one instruction and differentiated learning techniques.

5. Instructional Methods:

Robeson Early College High School builds all of our Instructional Methods around the North Carolina New Schools Project Design Principles. The design principles (Ready for College, Powerful Teaching and Learning, Personalization, Professionalism, Leadership, Purposeful Design) are the foundation on which all of our Instructional Methods are founded upon. Building off of our Design Principles as a staff we are able to effectively implement the North Carolina New Schools Project Instructional Methods. In addition to the North Carolina New Schools Design Principles and Instructional Methods our school follows the New Schools Project Protocols format. All of the NCNSP protocols are designed to include all of the instructional methods listed. By allowing the students to work in collaborative groups the students take ownership for their education. Here is a list of our Instructional Methods with a brief explanation of each of them:

1-Collaborative Group Work- Collaborative group work involves bringing students together in small groups for the common purpose of engaging in learning. Students are grouped intentionally with each student held accountable for contributing to the group work. Activities are designed so that students with diverse skill levels are supported as well as challenged by their peers. Collaborative group work uses questioning, scaffolding and classroom talk and centers literacy groups.

2-Writing to Learn- Writing to learn is a strategy through which students can develop their ideas, their critical thinking ability and their writing skills. Writing to learn enables students to experiment every day with written language and increase their fluency and mastery of written conventions.

3-Literacy Groups- Literacy groups provide students with a collaborative structure for understanding a variety of texts and engaging in a higher level of discourse. Group roles traditionally drive literacy groups by giving each student a role to play and a defined purpose within the group.

4-Questioning- Questioning challenges students and teachers to use good questions as a way to open conversations and further intellectual inquiry. Effective questioning deepens classroom conversations and the level of discourse students apply to their work. Teachers use this strategy to create opportunities for students to investigate and analyze their thinking as well as the thinking of their peers and the authors that they read in each of their classes.

5-Scaffolding- Scaffolding helps students to connect prior knowledge and experience with new information. Teachers use this strategy to connect students with previous learning in a content area as well as with previous learning in an earlier grade.

6-Classroom Talk- Classroom talk creates the space for students to articulate their thinking and strengthen

their voice. Classroom talk takes place in pairs, in collaborative group work and as a whole class. As students become accustomed to talking in class, the teacher serves as a facilitator to engage students in higher levels of discourse. Classroom talk opens the space for questioning, effective scaffolding and successful collaborative group work and literacy groups.

6. Professional Development:

The staff at Robeson Early College High School continually participates in Professional Development. Professional Development is available within the school, individual curriculum areas, the district, and the state. In addition to these, 42% of the teachers either have a Master's Degree or are working towards it.

The focus of the Robeson County school district for the 2011-2012 school year has been on addressing the National Standards for Mathematics and English. All teachers have been required to attend the Professional Developments called the "Common Core Standards" trainings.

The purpose of Professional Development is to improve teaching and learning to better serve the students at Robeson Early College High School. Several of the Professional Developments within the school are focused on the North Carolina New Schools Project Design Principles and the High Schools That Work Key Practices. Since the Design Principles and Key Practices are implemented in every classroom, the students are familiar with them. The students have goals set and know what is expected of them.

Professional Development enhances teacher knowledge and skills. Better knowledge and skills improve classroom teaching. Then improved teaching raises student achievement. Student achievement is evident at Robeson Early College High School. They have the highest EOC scores in the school district. Also, the percentage of students passing the Robeson Community College placement test increases each year.

7. School Leadership:

Leadership is a distributed enterprise at Robeson Early College. The willingness to do what it takes to succeed, echoes throughout the school. The administration and teachers talk about decisions to make sure all our students are career and college ready. All staff members are on the School Improvement Team and Materials and Budget committee. We identify needs, whether it's for instructional resources, staff development, or technology, prioritize them and use our monies to its maximum benefit.

Everyone take responsibility for student failures. Teachers, who serve also as Advisors, loop with the students from the time they enter as Freshmen to Year 13. We feel this strengthens trust and bonds that will last a lifetime. The school staff is constantly looking at the data we have from many sources and reassesses our daily priorities. Each year we take a look at our successes and our weakest areas, find new ways to approach those situations and find remedies that will benefit all stakeholders.

Teachers also serve as Instructional Leaders when two to three times a year we participate in "Peer Reviews". They welcome encouragement and suggestions for improving classroom instruction. When teachers return from staff development, they take on the responsibility of training fellow teachers and pass on new strategies and new ways to help students every day.

Our Principal, in her first year, has lead by example in taking responsibility for the students. The vision she has for the school is shared by all staff. Sound judgment is used to make those decisions that are ultimately up to that position in the school. The "Friday Focus" weekly bulletins usually contain up to minute education news, important items on our calendar and sometimes just food for thought. She makes sure staff is able to attend meetings, conferences and other opportunities available. Many of these, she attends as well to monitor instruction and gain understanding of each program and strategy being used in the school. Inspiration and encouragement is stressed through collaborative interactions, risk taking and leading by example.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 10 Test: Algebra II

Edition/Publication Year: 2003/2008 Publisher: NC DPI

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	May	May	May	Apr	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level III plus Level IV	97	98	77	82	72
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	59	45	44	45	57
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Level III plus Level IV	95	97	87	95	93
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	36	31	28	32	33
2. African American Students					
Level III plus Level IV					
Level IV					
Number of students tested	6	7	9	8	9
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level III plus Level IV					
Level IV					
Number of students tested	8	5		4	7
4. Special Education Students					
Level III plus Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Level III plus Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
6. Native American					
Level III plus Level IV	91	94	81	91	88
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	22	19	19	20	17
NOTES:					

12NC10

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 9 Test: Algebra I

Edition/Publication Year: 2003/2008 Publisher: NC DPI

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level III plus Level IV	100	96	82	85	78
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	44	45	44	40	41
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Level III plus Level IV	100	97	96	90	88
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	32	28	29	28	29
2. African American Students					
Level III plus Level IV					
Level IV					
Number of students tested	7	4	7	4	7
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level III plus Level IV					
Level IV					
Number of students tested	7	6	5	5	3
4. Special Education Students					
Level III plus Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Level III plus Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
6. Native American					
Level III plus Level IV	100	89	92	86	90
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	18	18	17	19	19
NOTES:					

12NC10

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 9 Test: English I

Edition/Publication Year: 2006 Publisher: NC DPI

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level III plus Level IV	100	100	91	85	90
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	44	45	45	40	39
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Level III plus Level IV	100	100	93	97	95
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	39	39	34	22	21
2. African American Students					
Level III plus Level IV					
Level IV					
Number of students tested	8	5	6	4	8
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level III plus Level IV					
Level IV					
Number of students tested	3	6	5	5	3
4. Special Education Students					
Level III plus Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Level III plus Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
6. Native American					
Level III plus Level IV	100	100	100	100	90
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	18	18	13	13	10
NOTES:					

12NC10

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level III plus Level IV	98	97	79	83	74
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	103	90	88	85	98
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Level III plus Level IV	97	97	91	92	90
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	68	59	57	60	62
2. African American Students					
Level III plus Level IV	100	100	68	62	69
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	13	11	16	12	16
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level III plus Level IV	100	100			59
Level IV	0	0			0
Number of students tested	15	11	5	9	10
4. Special Education Students					
Level III plus Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
5. English Language Learner Students					
Level III plus Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
Level III plus Level IV	95	91	86	88	89
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	40	37	36	39	36
NOTES:					

12NC10

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level III plus Level IV	100	100	91	85	90
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	44	45	45	40	39
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Level III plus Level IV	100	100	93	97	95
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	39	39	34	22	21
2. African American Students					
Level III plus Level IV					
Level IV					
Number of students tested	8	5	6	4	8
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level III plus Level IV					
Level IV					
Number of students tested	3	6	5	5	3
4. Special Education Students					
Level III plus Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
5. English Language Learner Students					
Level III plus Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
Level III plus Level IV	100	100	100	100	90
Level IV	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	18	18	13	13	10
NOTES:					

12NC10